

Reasonable adjustments in assessment

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

Purpose of AARA

Schools are responsible for administering assessment within the requirements of the relevant syllabus and meeting quality assurance processes for Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension), including Alternative Sequences and General (Senior External Examination (SEE)) subjects, and Short Courses.

Under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)*, schools are also responsible for ensuring that adjustments are provided, as needed, to enable students with disability to access and participate in assessment on the same basis as students without disability. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA) are determined in consultation with students and/or parents/carers. AARA are provided to minimise barriers for a student whose disability or medical condition affects their ability to read, respond to or participate in assessment on the same basis as other students. AARA are also appropriate when illness or misadventure pose barriers for students in assessment.

Decisions about AARA

Decisions about AARA are considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the evidence and the functional impact of the disability, medical condition or other circumstance. For AARA applications, evidence is summarised in school statements and reports from medical professionals (or other professionals, in the case of misadventure).

Adjustments are 'reasonable' when they achieve the purpose of enabling access and participation for the student on the same basis as other students, while schools also:

- balance the interests of all parties affected, including other students, staff and the school itself
- consider alternative reasonable adjustments that are less disruptive and intrusive but no less beneficial for the students, as needed
- maintain the academic requirements of subjects and ensure the integrity of assessment requirements and processes. All inherent requirements and components of the course must be maintained at the same standard for all students and AARA must not confer an advantage.

AARA are applicable for students who have completed required learning as outlined in the relevant syllabus or course. They cannot be used to compensate for learning that has not occurred or to exempt a student from the learning or knowledge and skill requirements of a subject or course.

Schools should regularly monitor and review student learning needs (current functional impacts) and the effectiveness of adjustments in enabling students to access and complete assessment on the same basis as other students and as independently as possible. When providing students with adjustments before summative assessment, schools are encouraged to take into account QCAA's principles of AARA, to ensure that enacted adjustments are consistent with AARA granted for Units 3 and 4.

Examples of AARA

As the application of AARA is based on the functional impact/s for the individual student, arrangements for assessment may vary significantly for different students with the same diagnosis, condition or circumstance. AARA may also vary between subjects and assessments for individual students, according to their individual needs and choices, and the nature of the assessment.

For this reason, the QCAA does not provide a prescriptive list of adjustments or impacts relevant to particular diagnoses, or an exhaustive list of possible conditions or circumstances to which AARA may be applied. The following table is designed to provide information, examples and prompts for schools to make decisions to support their individual student's needs. Applications for AARA demonstrating these functional barriers may have some, all or none of the examples included. See the [QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook](#), Section 6.4.4 for further information about possible AARA.

Note: Internal assessment and external assessment are abbreviated to IA and EA.

Possible impacts or barriers	Possible assessment AARA
Accessing and manipulating materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance (e.g. a teacher aide assisting with manipulation of equipment and other practical tasks) • Physical equipment (e.g. a specialised desk or chair) • Extra time or rest breaks
Accessing visual information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative format papers (e.g. enlarged print, electronic format, braille) • Assistive technology (e.g. a screen reader) • Vision aids (e.g. a magnifier) • Reader • Physical equipment/environment (e.g. need for two desks to accommodate enlarged materials) • Extra time or rest breaks
Attending to verbal instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance (e.g. supervisor using the student's name in reading assessment instructions) • Individual instructions • Varied seating
Colour vision deficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate format papers, i.e. black and white, where required
Coping with social dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied seating
Epileptic seizure before or during assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness and misadventure application for EA
Epileptic seizure risk (i.e. diagnosed condition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied seating • Medication
Focus, concentration, processing speed, working memory, 'cognitive load'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance (e.g. a supervisor prompting the student to start or continue undertaking the assessment task) • Extra time or rest breaks
Hearing verbal instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual instructions (e.g. written, signed) • Varied seating • Physical equipment (e.g. sound enhancement)
Diabetes hypoglycaemia or hyperglycaemia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness & misadventure application for EA
Diabetes monitoring/correcting blood glucose levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes management

Illness, e.g. flu; occurrence of episodic conditions (e.g. migraine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness and misadventure application for EA
Infant care/breastfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied seating • Rest breaks • Physical equipment (e.g. ergonomic furniture)
Pain, discomfort, fatigue — in producing written responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer, assistive technology or scribe • Physical equipment / environment • Rest breaks, varied seating • Medication
Pain, discomfort, fatigue — in sitting for long periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest breaks (e.g. to stand and stretch) • Varied seating • Physical equipment • Medication
Performing practical components of assessment — physical injury/disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Adjustment to physical activity (contact the QCAA)
Poor fine motor control, illegible handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer or assistive technology (e.g. speech recognition)
Reading instructions, questions, stimulus and own responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader or assistive technology (i.e. screen reader)
Regulating emotions, sensory processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied seating • Assistance (e.g. supervisor to provide support and reassurance) • Rest breaks
Restrictive or repetitive activities/behaviours, executive functioning, processing differences, emotional regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied seating • Assistance • Individual instructions • Rest breaks or extra time
Visual strain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest breaks
Written expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer, assistive technology (e.g. speech recognition) or scribe • Varied seating

More information

- National requirements
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*: www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763
 - *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)*: www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005
- QCAA policies and processes
 - *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*, Section 6
www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook/6-aara
 - AARA factsheets, all available at www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara
 - phone 1300 381 575 or email aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au.

 © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2023

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

Attribution (include the link): © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2023 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright.